

## The Road to Racial Progress in the Seventh-day Adventist Church: A Survey of Counsel and Policy from 1890-1920

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The end of the US Civil War brought not only freedom to slaves, but also new opportunities and experiences; including participation within Christian churches. As Reconstruction led to the Progressive Era, the attention given to black parishioners in the South occupied most Christian denominations. As missionaries went south to convert newly freed slaves they held several goals of maintaining the prewar social status quo as well as embracing the freedman. Some Northern churches gained access for the first time like the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. Other churches divided along the color line forming new organizations like the Consolidated American Baptist Convention.<sup>1</sup> While young churches like the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA) worked with the freedman and welcomed the South's former slaves to their mission.

The Seventh-day Adventist denomination became active as a group shortly after 1844, but fully organized by 1863.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the early periods of the church its

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<sup>1</sup> The color line was coined in the nineteenth century. The phrase signified segregation although during that period, many in America would view it as separation.

<sup>2</sup> see Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White*, 6 Vol. (Washington DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1981-85); Louis B. Reynolds, *We Have Tomorrow: The Story of American Seventh-day Adventists with an African Heritage* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1984); George R. Knight, ed., *Adventist Pioneer Series*, 6 Vol. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association); Delbert W. Baker, ed., *Make Us One: Celebrating Spiritual Unity in the Midst of Cultural Diversity* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1995); Alven Makapela, "The Problem with Africanity in the Seventh-day Adventist Church," *African Studies*, Vol. 42 (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press); Romauld Clifford Jones, *Utopia Park, Utopian Church: James K. Humphrey and the Emergence of the Sabbath-day Adventists* (Phd, diss., Western Michigan University, 2001); Gerard P. Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977); Mervyn C. Maxwell, *Tell it to the World* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1976); Arthur W. Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 4 vol. (Washington

leaders were supportive of abolition and some of them even participated in the Underground Railroad. This made it difficult for the church to enter the South in any significant way before the Civil War. By the end of the war and as the leadership organized it still had made little inroads in the South. The organization's Northeast origin along with the lack of understanding of Southern culture proved Southern expansion to be difficult.

As a product of its time, the church adopted policies that limited the effectiveness of black outreach while seemingly unaware that it had accepted cultural norms towards African Americans. While the ambitions of the church expressed the inclusiveness of its Christian message, in practice it hindered itself due to prejudice by the membership along with inconsistent policies. Because of this the road to full integration of African Americans and the execution of Black missions moved slowly.

The SDA church eventually entered the South while in the presence of established black churches and their white affiliates. As a result of entering the region, the SDA church faced challenges and roadblocks that made reaching the local population difficult. The SDA church would need to contend with the well-established Protestant congregations that had accepted white supremacy and were resistant to anything that pointed towards black progress in the South.

The challenge of integrating into Southern culture caused the SDA church to hesitate in establishing a committed mission to the South. The work needed a strong

voice to promote the work from within and that came from co-founder Ellen G. White.<sup>3</sup>

As an authoritative figure within the young church, EGW's counsel carried strong support. Her messages concerning African Americans and the need for their involvement in the church provided the motivation necessary to propel Adventists into the South.

EGW witnessed prejudice growing within the denomination and increased her correspondence with church members and leaders alike. As the church advanced into the South, so did the advance of racial bias within the church. To combat these sentiments EGW presented systematic methods and principles. This centered the church leadership on a path of constructive missions that would successfully implant itself into the South. In order to understand the challenges and progress with African Americans within the denomination it is important to look at the writings of Ellen White and how it affected church polity.

Ellen Gould Harmon was born in Portland Maine November, 26 1827. She experienced early challenges when a school yard accident in 1836 left her with major health problems for the remainder of her life. She was baptized into the Methodist church in 1841, but became fully converted into Christianity after receiving two dreams in 1842. During this time, her family became attracted to the preaching of a Baptist minister by the name of William Miller and his teachings of the imminent return of Jesus in 1844. Because of their attraction to Miller's message, the Harmon family had their memberships removed from the Methodist church. The subsequent disappointment at the failed fulfillment of Christ's return with further dreams and visions established her

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<sup>3</sup>Throughout this paper I will refer to Ellen G. White as EGW.

prophetic ministry and along with her eventual husband James White, they began the movement that would later grow into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.<sup>4</sup>

Growing up within the Methodist communion Ellen White adopted many of the anti-slavery sentiments prevalent within that denomination. As she grew into her own and began to write counsels to the then small contingent, those views were strengthened. Her strong abolitionist upbringing secured her commitment for the freedom and right treatment of slaves. Speaking out against the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, White urged the group “to abide the consequences of breaking this law.”<sup>5</sup> The reality of prejudice manifested within the movement caused EGW to speak out vocally against members that maintained their prejudice against African Americans.<sup>6</sup>

EGW even recognized the large pro slavery sentiment in America during this period of time. This led EGW to emphasize the incongruent nature of slavery with her view of Christianity, and expressed the mutual responsibility between the North and the South for sustaining the abuses against African Americans.<sup>7</sup> Her position echoed the

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<sup>4</sup> For a more information see Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White*, Vol. 1, 15-125, 445-85. For more information concerning the Millerite movement and the Great Disappointment see Samuel G. London Jr., *Seventh-day Adventists and Civil Rights* (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 2009), 11-22.

<sup>5</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 1 (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948) 202.

<sup>6</sup> “There are a few in the ranks of Sabbathkeepers who sympathize with the slaveholder... I was shown that it mattered not how much the master had paid for human flesh and the souls of men; God gives him no title to human souls... Christ died for the whole human family, whether white or black...” and in a letter to an offending member, “God is punishing the North that they have so long suffered the accursed sin of slavery... you... have permitted your political principles to destroy your judgment and your love for truth... Your views of slavery cannot harmonize with the sacred, important truths for this time... Unless you undo what you have done, it will be the duty of God's people to publically withdraw their sympathy and fellowship from you,” White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, 358-359.

<sup>7</sup> “This sin of Northern proslavery men is great. They have strengthened the South in their sin by sanctioning the extension of slavery... many do not realize the extent of the evil which has come upon

general consensus of the leadership in the antebellum period and into the Civil War.<sup>8</sup>

For Ellen White, the view of anyone as inferior did not line up with her understanding of Jesus or the Bible. EGW's methods for counteracting prevalent racism led her to point out the clear inconsistencies between the Christian faith and bigotry. EGW used the method of uplifting Christ and pointing to Jesus as a reason to do away with racism and class theory:

Whatever may be the nationality or color, whatever may be the social condition, the missionary for God will look upon all men as the purchase of the blood of Christ, and will understand that there is no caste with God. No one is to be looked upon with indifference or to be regarded as unimportant, for every soul has been purchased with an infinite price.<sup>9</sup>

A consecrated heart to Jesus transformed the mind and would do away with cherished positions, traditions, and views.<sup>10</sup> She emphasized the lowly state that Jesus Christ took on behalf of all humanity.<sup>11</sup>

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us. They have flattered themselves that the national difficulties would soon be settled and confusion and war end, but all will be convinced that there is more reality in the matter than was anticipated." White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, 264.

<sup>8</sup>Trevor O'Reggio, "The Connection Between Slavery and Prophecy as it Related to the American Nation in the Writings of the Adventist Pioneers During the Antebellum Period," *Faculty Publications: History Research* 2, no. 5(Andrews University, July 2012), 320-327, accessed November 2, 2015, <http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/church-history-pubs/2>.

<sup>9</sup>White, *The Southern Work*, 31.

<sup>10</sup>"The same price was paid for the salvation of the colored man as for that of the white man, and the slights put upon the colored people by many who claim to be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and who therefore acknowledge themselves debtors to Christ, misrepresent Jesus, and reveal that selfishness, tradition, and prejudice pollute the soul. White, *The Southern Work* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1966), 13.

<sup>11</sup>Some representative examples include Christ of highest class but humbling Himself see White, *Southern Work*, 9-10, 26, 27, 35, 45; e.g. biblical references of Moses Pharaoh narrative see White,

Ellen White's views on the issue of race came across much differently than the surrounding denominations in the mid-nineteenth century and her views on class were practically unheard of even in the twentieth century. Most Christian churches were strongly in support of viewing African Americans as inferior.<sup>12</sup> While even the strongest black minds never saw the disenfranchisement of African Americans as a reason to do away with class.<sup>13</sup> The way that EGW viewed the state of humanity provided a revolutionary picture of Christianity for her time. In her eyes, when the church became fully consecrated to God there would be no desire to separate from those whom they would be fellowshiping with for all of eternity:

Men may have both hereditary and cultivated prejudices, but when the love of Jesus fills the heart, and they become one with Christ, they will have the same spirit that He had. If a colored brother sits by their side, they will not be offended or despise him. They are journeying to the same heaven, and

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*Southern Work*, 14; 23; Good Samaritan see White, *The Southern Work*, 19, 20, 26, 37, *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, 59, *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, 209.

<sup>12</sup> Many during most of the nineteenth century tended to accept slavery as a biblical institution either by adopting Hamitic determinism or the less extreme but equally racist view of slavery as a predetermined blessing for blacks, Michael E. Williams Sr., and Walter B. Shurden, eds., *Turning Points in Baptist History: A Festschrift in Honor of Harry Leon McBeth* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008), 169-171. Also see comments on utilization of Social Darwinism, David W. Bebbington, *Baptists through the Centuries: A History of a Global People* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010) 145.

<sup>13</sup> Booker T. Washington believed that integration would occur in time without need for agitation, "The social lines that were once sharply drawn between those who labored with the hands and those who did not are disappearing," *The Future of the American Negro*, 92; The attempts of Du Bois with the Niagara Movement (1905) were meant to bring about equal opportunity for the black man not complete integration. While this statement is made in 1935, it is representative of the approach of the NAACP during the early part of the twentieth century. "If Negroes could conceive that Negroes could establish schools quite as good as or even superior to white schools; if Negro colleges were of equal grade in accomplishment and in scientific work with white colleges; then separation would be a passing incident and not a permanent evil; but as long as American Negroes believe that their race is constitutionally and permanently inferior to white people, they necessarily disbelieve in every possible Negro Institution," W.E.B Du Bois, "Does the Negro Need Separate Schools?," *Journal of Negro Education* (1935) accessed November 1, 2015, <http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/tmkeck/Cases/10kthedebateoverstrategiesforachievingracialequality.pdf>.

will be seated at the same table to eat bread in the kingdom of God. If Jesus is abiding in our hearts we cannot despise the colored man who has the same Saviour abiding in his heart.<sup>14</sup>

Such sentiments along with the teaching of the soon coming Christ attracted Black members into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Even though Black membership remained low up until the beginning of the twentieth century, those who did join were deeply encouraged by the positive Christian message as presented by EGW. Unfortunately, many of the white members within Adventism were not ready to receive them as equals.

By 1890, the SDA church had a membership of about 50 African Americans out of a total membership of close to 28,000.<sup>15</sup> The low number suggests that most African Americans came in by circumstance,<sup>16</sup> but there appeared also to be deep prejudice from churches surrounded by larger African American populations.<sup>17</sup> This would make it difficult to retain any minority members within these groups. As the message of inclusiveness went out and attracted many, the exclusiveness of the members presented an entirely different message.

Many who came into the church were converted from other Protestant denominations. In the South most parishioners came from either the Baptist or Methodist faiths. These communions accepted views of the African American as less

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<sup>14</sup> White, *The Southern Work*, 14.

<sup>15</sup> So Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 185, 343, from Delbert W. Baker, *The Dynamics of Communication and African American Progress in the Seventh-day Adventist Organization: A Historical Descriptive Analysis* (Phd diss., Howard University, 1992), 77 fn.82, 278; *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 1890.

<sup>16</sup> Baker, *The Dynamics of Communication*, 31, 279-280.

<sup>17</sup> See below.

than human.<sup>18</sup> Building off of the philosophies of Charles Darwin, many Americans including Christians found strong support for the superiority of the white race over African Americans, the migrant and other indigenous races around the world.<sup>19</sup> Other scholars including Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner created connections between Darwinism and society effectively creating the idea of Social Darwinism.<sup>20</sup> Within Social Darwinism, scholars viewed race and class as the determinants to survival. Christians viewed the scholarly data as further support for distancing themselves from any notion of integration with African Americans.

With naturalistic theories such as these, many whites in the North and the South viewed themselves not only privileged but advanced over the immigrant and especially the freedman.<sup>21</sup> These views confirmed classism and within this framework racism, prejudice, and subjugation of African Americans gained elitist approval. This in turn trickled down into the general communities. The early presence of racism within the Seventh-day Adventist church suggests that some members converted from the surrounding churches continued to adhere to at least a form of these theories and by

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<sup>18</sup> See Ciro Sepulveda, ed., *Ellen White on the Color Line: The Idea of Race in a Christian Community* (Huntsville, AL: Biblos Press, 1997), 30-31.

<sup>19</sup> "England gave Darwin to the world, but the United States gave to Darwinism an unusually quick and sympathetic reception," Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism* (Beacon Press Edition, 1955), 4 from Robert C. Bannister, *Social Darwinism: Science and Myth in Anglo-American Social Thought* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979), 8 fn. 16; Reflecting on the ways in which Charles Darwin's *Descent of Man* and Social Darwinism synthesized in Theistic thought, Greta Jones said, "Characterisation's of race and class... had these features. First of all the hierarchy was generated outside of society by natural rather than by social laws... The conviction of many social Darwinist thinkers that racial and social inequality was the product of natural selection is very little different from Paley's conviction that the pattern of both the natural and social world was generated by divine reason operating to distribute individual or classes of animals in their places," *Social Darwinism and English Thought* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press Inc.), 142.

<sup>20</sup> London, *Seventh-day Adventists and the Civil Rights Movement*, 41.

<sup>21</sup> Michael J. Klarman, *From Jim Crow to Civil Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 44; Adam Fairclough, *A Better Day Coming* (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2001), 12.



consequence made the church more susceptible to white supremacy.

In 1887 the SDA church vigorously debated the issue of the color line and what position Southern black men would be given within the church. After much debate as to the best path to pursue, the church eventually decided that all adherents to the Seventh-day Adventist faith should be accepted as equal members, but that any policy should be given by recommendation of a committee.<sup>22</sup> Upon further study, the committee established to review this issue, recommended that no official action be taken for or against African Americans.<sup>23</sup> By 1889 this had effectively been understood as a license to maintain the status quo.<sup>24</sup> The church failed to address issues of racism within the ranks. In effect the SDA church by being silent allowed for continued practices of prejudice and segregation within its churches. One Adventist church in St. Louis became an icon highlighting the results of continued negligence by the leadership. This church caused Ellen G. White to respond publically to the growing trend of racism.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See Baker, *Dynamics of Communication*, 54-55; as reported, “Resolved, that it is the decided opinion of this conference, that when the Colored people of the South accept the third angel’s message they should be received into the church on an equality with the white members, no discrimination whatever being made between the two races in church relations,” *General Conference Bulletin*, November 14, 1887, 2-3.

<sup>23</sup> *General Conference Bulletin*, November 21, 1887, 2,3; as is common, most Adventist historians glossed over the significance of this moment, e.g. Arthur White, *Ellen G. White*, Vol. 3, 376.

<sup>24</sup> See Jones, *Utopia Park, Utopian Church: James K. Humphrey and the Emergence of the Sabbath-day Adventists* (Phd, diss., Western Michigan University, 2001), 143-144; Both EGW’s response (see fn. 28) and the lack of recorded resolution (see *GCB*, Oct. 24, 1889) highlight the unwillingness for the church to fully support African Americans; cf. Douglas Morgan, *Lewis C. Sheafe: Apostle to Black America* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2010), 183.

<sup>25</sup> In her private letters, EGW voice some concerns, referring to the report of R.M. Kilgore supervisor of District 2 (i.e. the southern region) support for setting a color line policy for the church, see *Manuscript 22*, October 1889; to see southern response and extracts from Kilgore’s letter see Baker, *Dynamics of Communication*, 277-278, fn.46; Most likely EGW responded negatively to allowing the Southern culture to circumvent a consistent Adventist message in response, “It has become habit to

EGW's visit to St. Louis became the situation that gave her clarity into the churches need for clear guidelines concerning race relations. She realized like never before the significant problem of prejudice that existed within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. While there she experienced bigotry and a demeaning spirit against Black converts who worshipped there. Using this experience as a backdrop, she addressed the challenges the church faced:

While at St. Louis a year ago, as I knelt in prayer, these words were represented to me as if written with a pen of fire: "All ye are brethren." The Spirit of God rested upon me in a wonderful manner, and matters were opened to me in regard to the church at St. Louis and in other places. The spirit and words of some in regard to members of the church were an offense to God. They were closing the door of their hearts to Jesus. Among those in St. Louis who believe the truth there are colored people who are true and faithful, precious in the sight of the God of heaven, and they should have just as much respect as any of God's children. Those who have spoken harshly to them or have despised them have despised the purchase of the blood of Christ, and they need the transforming grace of Christ in their own hearts, that they may have the pitying tenderness of Jesus toward those who love God with all the fervor of which they themselves are capable. The color of the skin does not determine character in the heavenly courts.<sup>26</sup>

The cherished positions of the church could not achieve the type of growth that EGW expected. As the church continued missional expansion, they would need to be united over how to treat their fellow members, and with the gospel call to go into the entire world, the SDA church needed to stand united against racism within the church.

1891 became the turning point for church race relations. During the 1891

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pass laws that do not always bear the signature of heaven. The question of the color line should not have been made a business for the [General] Conference to settle," White, *Manuscript 6*, November 4, 1889.

<sup>26</sup> White, *The Southern Work*, 11.

General Conference Session, Ellen G. White spoke passionately before delegates representing the world church.<sup>27</sup> There they heard the call for Adventists to address the racial prejudices that hindered missional progress. Ellen White pointed out the inaction of the leadership during her “Our Duty to Colored People” speech:

At the General Conference of 1889, resolutions were presented in regard to the color line. Such action is not called for. Let not men take the place of God, but stand aside in awe, and let God work upon human hearts, both white and black, in His own way. He will adjust all these perplexing questions. We need not prescribe a definite plan of working. Leave an opportunity for God to do something. We should be careful not to strengthen prejudices that ought to have died as soon as Christ redeemed the soul from the bondage of sin.<sup>28</sup>

Ellen White rebuked the church for its lack of effort in showing direct interest concerning the salvation of the Black community. By presenting this to the world church she made it clear that that “sin rests upon us as a church because we have not made greater efforts for the salvation of souls among the colored people.”<sup>29</sup> This speech became the

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<sup>27</sup> At the time the church structure included the local church level, a conference (or division) level and then a general conference, this eventually evolved into the current structure: “The Seventh-day Adventist® Church is organized with a representative form of church government. This means authority in the Church comes from the membership of local churches. Executive responsibility is given to representative bodies and officers to govern the Church. Four levels of Church structure lead from the individual believer to the worldwide Church organization: The local church is made up of individual believers, the local conference, or local field/mission, is made up of a number of local churches in a state, province, or territory, The union conference, or union field/mission, is made up of conferences or fields within a larger territory (often a grouping of states or a whole country). The General Conference, the most extensive unit of organization, is made up of all unions/entities in all parts of the world. Divisions are sections of the General Conference, with administrative responsibility for particular geographical areas,” see “Organizational Structure,” *Seventh-day Adventist Church: North American Division*, accessed December 1, 2015, <http://www.nadadventist.org/article/19/about-our-church/organizational-structure>;

<sup>28</sup> White, *Southern Work*, 15.

<sup>29</sup> White, *Southern Work*, 15.

framework for future policies and missions for the South.<sup>30</sup>

Consistent in her approach, Ellen White pointed to the transformed heart as the ultimate remedy to deal with what she called “perplexing questions.”<sup>31</sup> The issue of racism and the color line could only be counteracted by making Christ their personal Savior. For her it made no sense in keeping converted Southern Blacks from full membership and entrance into already existing churches. On the other hand EGW stressed the need to work carefully to not cause unnecessary agitation by White Southerners opposed to Black advancement.<sup>32</sup>

Another key method that EGW saw as integral to success in the South required the education of African American Bible Workers. These workers would be able to work without hindrance on behalf of their “fellow race.”<sup>33</sup> She also made a call for White missionaries to actively labor in the Southern field. “Imbued with a missionary spirit” EGW predicted that the church would deeply benefit the African American community. As per her usual method, she established the ideal for the church, but also left room for applying these principles in a case by case basis.<sup>34</sup> Over the next fourteen years Ellen White continued to sacrifice her time and her resources on behalf of the Southern Work.

Consistently EGW spoke out against the color line.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand she also expected that workers needed to be careful in how they expressed their beliefs with those in the South. An example of this can be found in a letter written in 1895. EGW

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<sup>30</sup> See White, *Letter to Edson White*, October 1, 1894.

<sup>31</sup> White, *Southern Work*, 9.

<sup>32</sup> White, *Southern Work*, 15.

<sup>33</sup> White, *Southern Work*, 15-16.

<sup>34</sup> For a more comprehensive presentation on EGW’s methods see Baker, *Dynamics of Communication*, 165-344.

<sup>35</sup> e.g. White, *Southern Work*, 22, 43, 54-55; *Manuscript 73*, March 20, 1891.

writing to administrators, after quoting the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians,<sup>36</sup> stated:

We know that the apostle did not sacrifice one jot or principle. He did not allow himself to be led away by the sophistry and maxims of men... All zeal and earnestness are to be retained; but at the same time some features of our faith, if expressed, would, by the elements with which you have to deal, arouse prejudice at once.<sup>37</sup>

She encouraged workers and administrators to “study the situation” on the ground, and then apply wisely the principles of the Christian faith.<sup>38</sup>

Rather than adopting any of the popular theories during that time, EGW encouraged missionaries to utilize Adventist education and Bible training. Ultimately, they were to act in benevolence towards African Americans, both accepting them into equal fellowship and offering them pathways to bettering their situation.<sup>39</sup> By exercising extreme caution when interacting with Southern whites, she hoped that all portions of the community could be reached.<sup>40</sup>

Shortly after Ellen White’s message to the General Conference in 1891 she was dispatched to Australia. Most likely this move occurred in order to allow the administration to facilitate policies without direct intervention from EGW.<sup>41</sup> Her agitation

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<sup>36</sup> 1 Cor. 9:20-23.

<sup>37</sup> White, *Southern Work*, 76-77.

<sup>38</sup> White, *Southern Work*, 74.

<sup>39</sup> White, *Southern Work*, 15.

<sup>40</sup> White, *Southern Work*, 95; “Christ is to be their text,” White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 7, 228.

<sup>41</sup> This is an interesting turn of events in light of the theological and managerial controversies that were present between EGW and the General Conference. It has been postulated that EGW was sent away so that she would no longer agitate the plans of the GC. This view is confirmed upon reading a letter written to the GC president O.A. Olsen, “The Lord was not in our leaving America... The Lord did not plan this, but he let you all move after your own imaginings... We were needed here at the heart of the work... There was so great willingness to have us leave, that the Lord permitted this to take place...

over the cherished prejudices among white members along with her urgent call for a more focused and organized approach to missions caused discomfort in the leadership. As the SDA church expanded to meet the demand of a growing worldwide church it faced the challenges brought forth by rapid growth. Yet, EGW challenged them to continue to move into uncomfortable territory.<sup>42</sup> Her absence from the churches headquarters explains why the SDA church delayed missional actions to the South for another two years.

In 1893 James Edson White, the son of Ellen White, acquired a copy of his mother's 1891 speech "Our Duty to Colored People." Convicted by the call to missions in the South he gave up his business ventures in the North and put his full attention towards reaching the Black South.<sup>43</sup> By utilizing methods previously tested by earlier workers in the South along with the counsel of his mother, Edson established a viable missional strategy for Mississippi and eventually the entire region.<sup>44</sup> In order to work

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Our separation from Battle Creek was to let men have their own will and way, which they thought superior to the way of the Lord," *EGW letter to O.A. Olsen*, December 1, 1886; Also interesting is her anxiousness to return just before the Kellogg Crisis began in earnest. See Arthur White, *Ellen G. White*, Vol. 4, 13-19, 454-55, and, Vol. 5, 280-306.

<sup>42</sup> EGW would continue to emphasize the point for continued organized expansion. e.g. her 1874 reference to missions in its fledgling stage, "You are entertaining too limited ideas of the work for this time. You are trying to plan the work so that you can embrace it in your arms. You must take broader views," White, *Life Sketches*, 208 from Alberto R. Trimm and Dwain N. Esmond, eds., *The Gift of Prophecy: In Scripture and History* (Silver Springs, MD: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2015), 339-40.

<sup>43</sup> For a narrative history on the success of Edson White see Ronald Graybill, *Mission to Black America* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1970).

<sup>44</sup> Charles Kinney was the first African American ordained minister for the SDA church. His contributions cannot be overstated. Arguably the combined efforts of EGW, Edson and Kinney set in motion the future successes for African Americans within the denomination, see O'Regio, "Father of Black Adventism," *Faculty Publication* 25, no. 1 (2014), 1-16; Benjamin Baker, "A Look in the Mirror: Ellen White, Blacks, and the Adventist Church" (presented to Adventism and Adventist History: Sesquicentennial Reflections, January 6, 2014), 1, accessed November 2, 2015, <http://documents>.

around some of the difficulties in preaching to African Americans, with his own funds, he had the river boat “Morning Star” constructed.<sup>45</sup> This allowed Edson to hold meetings, educational classes and when needed a viable means of escape. By 1895 Edson became actively involved in the Southern Work.

Throughout Edson White’s time working in the South, he had to contend with significant shortages and setbacks. Therefore, he oftentimes would use his own earnings to sustain the work.<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately, SDA leadership continued to delay in assisting his early mission ventures. Many were in doubt of the validity of Edson’s methods, and accused him of spending funds in a grand manner.<sup>47</sup> Often time’s requests for missional funds would go unanswered.<sup>48</sup> Because the church’s lack of financial accountability during the 1890s, much of the funds dedicated to the Southern Work never reached the field.

As efforts increased in the South, so too did requests for donations.<sup>49</sup> In hopes of gaining much needed financial support Edson White wrote *Gospel Primer* in 1896. Further, in the midst of the year, the *Review and Herald* received over eleven thousand dollars in donations from Sabbath Schools across the nation.<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately neither of these sources of revenue reached the Southern field that year. In the meantime Ellen

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[adventistarchives.org/conferences/ASTR/ASDAH%202014/18.%20Baker,%20A%20Look%20In%20The%20Mirror.pdf](http://adventistarchives.org/conferences/ASTR/ASDAH%202014/18.%20Baker,%20A%20Look%20In%20The%20Mirror.pdf).

<sup>45</sup> See Arthur White, *Vol. 5*, 59-63.

<sup>46</sup> We see a number of instances where Edson reports a shortage of income, e.g. Letter, James Edson White to GC President, January 14, 1895; Statement of finances showing deficit advanced by J.E. White, “Statement of Donations,” December 31, 1898 accessed December 2, 2015, <http://ellenwhite.org/content/correspondence/white-je/003192pdf>.

<sup>47</sup> Graybill, *Mission to Black America*, 128; Arthur White, *Vol. 5*, 63-4.

<sup>48</sup> *General Conference Committee Minutes*, 1898, 33.

<sup>49</sup> *GCC*, 1897, 141.

<sup>50</sup> For report of sales see *GCC*, 1897, 113.

White along with her son continued to financially support the work being done in the South. At times, they even took out loans in order to meet the financial needs of an impoverished congregation. Eventually, EGW realized the significant mistakes being made financially by the church. In 1899 in a letter from Australia, EGW made mention of her knowledge of the gross mishandling of church funds.<sup>51</sup>

Upon receiving letters of rebuke from EGW, the General Conference and the *Review and Herald*, attempted to identify the reason for such a significant oversight. In 1899 the *Review and Herald* gave their financial report that showed the General Conference responsible for diverting over eleven thousand dollars away from the Southern field and into other interests. In hopes of saving face and spreading the blame the members of the committee voted to change the official wording of the voted resolution:

It appears to your committee that the General Conference, General Conference Association, and Pacific Press Publishing Company are alike involved in the turning aside of the funds of the International Sabbath School Association designed for the Southern field; and inasmuch as the Lord by the Testimonies holds us responsible for the restoration of these funds to that field, we would therefore submit... That the General Conference and General Conference Association restore an amount equal to the principle, and Pacific Press Publishing Company an amount equal to the accrued interest.<sup>52</sup>

The SDA church immediately made restitutions on behalf of the Southern Work, but the delay significantly slowed momentum. Rather than concerted effort in fields where

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<sup>51</sup> "But methods were used to divert the means for this purpose into other channels. Through misrepresentation and misinterpretation the Southern field has been robbed. That field has not received from the Lord's treasury its meat in due season," White, *Southern Work*, 89.

<sup>52</sup> All affiliations mentioned were all operated by the General Conference. GCC, 1899, 89.



resources remained in short supply, the SDA church continued to pump money into already stable White mission fields.

Ellen White considered these diversions to be meditated actions against the Southern Work in general and African Americans specifically.<sup>53</sup> In expressing her frustrations she pointed to ventures that were not urgent needs and yet were given higher priority.<sup>54</sup> While EGW worked in Australia, the SDA church continued to promote agendas that were not consistent with their committed goals for worldwide missional outreach. Even with lackluster support from the church, the Southern field experienced significant success near the end of the nineteenth century.

One institution established in the South proved to be extremely successful. In 1896, 360 acres of land in Huntsville, Alabama was purchased by the SDA Church and took the name Oakwood Industrial School.<sup>55</sup> With direct support from leaders, the school opened its doors to sixteen students, and even General Conference President O.A. Olsen committed personal time to tending to the rough terrain.<sup>56</sup> Established as an Industrial School, it also met the approval of the local white community. Practical trades intended to enable students to advance agricultural understanding and benefit their home communities. Also, students were given the necessary instruction in order to become active Bible Workers. The industrial model provided an accepted avenue for

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<sup>53</sup> See Baker, *Dynamics of Communication*, 104.

<sup>54</sup> "Eighty thousand dollars, I understand, were invested in the sanitarium in Boulder, pressing upon the heart of the work a heavier load of debt than was already there. Did the Lord devise that work? No; that amount of money is consumed, so that the will of God is not done... Money has been invested in various conveniences and facilities which the Lord never directed... There is earnest work to be done, but the money is consumed, so that the will of God is not done," White, *Southern Work*, 89.

<sup>55</sup> Or "The Huntsville School," see Benjamin Baker, *A Place Called Oakwood: Inspired Counsel* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2007), i.

<sup>56</sup> See Reynolds, *We Have Tomorrow*, 190-211;

SDA's to share their faith among White Southerners.

As missionaries advanced into the South, small schools and churches were established to benefit Blacks and Whites alike.<sup>57</sup> The efforts of every institution established intended to offer spiritual and practical education to the impoverished illiterate Southern community. All aspects in the field became avenues to grow interest and bring both races into a flourishing relationship with Jesus Christ. Also, due to the committed mission work in the South, African American membership within the Seventh-day Adventist church saw significant growth.<sup>58</sup> The once impossible field began to show signs of life.

The SDA church entered the twentieth century with an established and surprisingly successful Southern mission field. The dedication of mission workers encouraged by the ever increasing counsel from Ellen White proved critical to success thus far. While comparatively great strides were accomplished, EGW saw significant challenges ahead for the denomination. Reflecting the hurdles ahead she said: "In the South there are some places where work can be done. But the neglect of our people to respond to the light God has given has closed some openings which it will now be very difficult for them to enter."<sup>59</sup> EGW saw the challenges with the leadership, and the unwillingness of many to commit to the cause of African Americans as a significant challenge that would hinder the work. In her mind, the window of opportunity to effect change through the gospel was closing fast.

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<sup>57</sup> For list of schools see Baker, *Dynamics of Communication*, 297; for significant church structures see Reynolds, *We Have Tomorrow*, 159.

<sup>58</sup> "Church membership among blacks increased from 50 (in 1891) to 3,500 within the next two decades," Baker, *Dynamics of Communication*, 62 (brackets supplied).

<sup>59</sup> White, *Southern Work*, 88.

For some time Ellen White had been urging the church to distribute administrative functions in order to facilitate the immediate needs of missionaries in their regions.<sup>60</sup> From 1901-1903 the SDA church began the process of reorganization.<sup>61</sup> This in turn gave more autonomy for the Southern region. The Southern Union Conference replaced District 2 and now oversaw all local Southern State Conferences. They also were given the much needed authority to support local missions financially. This also created an opportunity for the church to work quicker to meet the needs of African Americans.

The 1900s became a time where Ellen White's counsel became more specific towards how to meet the needs of the African American community. But the color line continued to be a trying issue for the SDA church. Some members eager to contribute to the work went into the South with no regard for the color line and others intended for EGW's counsel as permission to segregate all Adventist institutions in general. To both of these extremes EGW countered:

There are some teachers who have taught that no distinction should be made between the white and the colored people. Were their teachings followed, the way for missionary work in the South would be hedged up. Some have flattered and petted the colored people, greatly harming those who with proper treatment and proper education would have made workers in the good cause of educating others.... You try to make others believe that what has been written with reference to the color line means only those in the South. But it means those in the North as well as the South.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> See Bert Haloviak, "Approaches to Church Organization," (Paper submitted for the Commission on World Church Organization, March 23-29, 1993), accessed December 2, 2015, [https://session.adventistfaith.org/uploaded\\_assets/399228](https://session.adventistfaith.org/uploaded_assets/399228).

<sup>61</sup> For brief summary see Barry Oliver, "Organized for a Purpose," *Ministry* (February, 2010).

<sup>62</sup> White, *Manuscript 73*, March 20, 1891.

Extreme sensitivity to the issue of racism needed to be adhered to by the members of the church. EGW continued to counsel that in order to effectively reach the most people in the South, views of the complete equality of all should be shared only after people made a decision to accept Bible truth.<sup>63</sup> Ellen White urged the churches to practice their equality covertly, but never did she intend for the form of marginalization that occurred within the denomination.

In the 1903 General Conference, again Ellen White called leaders to task over continued prejudice within the church. She reminded the delegates that attempting to create specific rules to work within the color line did not line up with their overall message. EGW stated that “The Lord has not made any such line, and He has no special lines for His people to define.” She further urged the delegates that “a resolution saying that the colored should not be allowed to assemble with the white people should never be passed.” At the same time she urged Black ministers to stay committed to reaching “their own people.”<sup>64</sup> While Ellen White continued to call for deliberate and fluid methods to reach as many people as possible in the South, the leadership took the call for no official policy for a color line as a policy to promote the color line. The church began to institute unequal measures that kept African Americans from many of the benefits and services that came with the Adventist faith.

The challenge with how to handle the growing African American membership

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<sup>63</sup> “There is danger that if the color-line question is agitated before the people shall hear from the Bible the reasons of our faith, the minds of many will be closed against the truth. We must do all we possibly can to get the truth before the people. We do not want to close the avenues whereby we may gain access to people of every class,” White, *Manuscript 77*, August 2, 1903.

<sup>64</sup> White, *Manuscript 75a*, July 29, 1903.

became a more challenging question in the Border States. Often times in the urban centers, newly founded churches with significant Black membership found themselves unable to benefit from the local Adventist institutions. While attempting to accommodate to local policies concerning the color line, the church failed to provide members with equal access to resources.<sup>65</sup> Lack of access to schools and hospitals began to physically affect the wellbeing of Black members. This problem caused African Americans to reach out to their leadership and eventually their concerns reached the newly elected General Conference President, Arthur G. Daniels.

Upon beginning his position as president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in 1901, Arthur G. Daniels considered DC a field that needed to be segregated much like the Southern Union Conference. Ultimately, Daniels believed that the church would benefit by keeping the races separate and he established subtle policies starting in DC.<sup>66</sup> He believed that naturally the races would begin to separate due to preference of worship. In 1902 during a Southern Union organizational meeting Daniels began working to establish his “unofficial” policy for creating segregation policy within Adventism. In a letter, his reasoning became clear:

First, That the time in which we live, and the message we have to give, demand that we shall not waste our time in squabbles over the color question; but that we devote our energies to the salvation of both races. Second, That no effort be made to bring about an equality of the races, nor join the popular cry of elevating the colored man. Third, That we advise separate meetings of the races in those parts of the country where it causes offense for them to mix.

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<sup>65</sup> EGW expected that various institutions needed to be established in order to create “centers of influence,” White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 7, 234; Baker, *A Place Called Oakwood*, 67-69.

<sup>66</sup> Morris highlights that Daniels spent a significant amount of time under Kilgore (see fn.25) who supported segregation, see Morris, *Apostle to Black America*, 186-188.

Fourth, That in separating the races for meeting purposes, we shall not leave the colored people to themselves, nor neglect friendly counsel and cooperation in church management.<sup>67</sup>

Being that Black representatives were not allowed to effect policy through their vote at this session, the churches plan to institute separate race church communities began. At the same time, no emphasis on how the church planned to meet the needs of African Americans in these communities ever occurred. African Americans in DC now faced the churches policy for a separate but not equal fellowship.

The Nashville meeting revealed the true intent of Daniel's proposal. He did not mind African Americans as members of the Seventh-day Adventist church, but Daniels expected all Blacks to know their place. Between the lines Daniel's helped maintain and sustain covert racism within the denomination. With seemingly universal support among leaders it is not surprising that some members believed that support for this form of separation came with Ellen White's approval.<sup>68</sup>

A.G. Daniel's plan to separate church along the color line in Washington DC met significant resistance from members at the local church level. In DC local Black Adventists found themselves isolated from needed healthcare and education. The People's Seventh-day Adventist Church attempted to find a solution to the problems they faced. When they looked around they saw the White Adventist sectors flourishing. New construction funds for an all-White church along with the large investment for the General Conference Headquarters at Tacoma Park made it difficult for the People's

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<sup>67</sup> Letter, A.G. Daniels to H.W. Cottrell, January 21, 1902 from Morris, *Apostle to Black America*, 190.

<sup>68</sup> See Morgan, *Apostle to Black America*, 185.

church to see the situation as equal. After years of attempts, the church finally submitted an official request to the General Conference Committee in 1905:

We believe that the third angel's message is of God, that it is for all the people, and that it is to be given in this generation. We desire to give the whole message in our day, and generation; but we find ourselves handicapped in that we have no schools, hospitals, or sanitariums under our control, or to the best of our knowledge, for our use. And as there is no relief in sight along the line of hospital, school, or sanitarium facilities (judging from the doctrine of expediency by which the Seventh-day Adventist churches in this city were separated on racial grounds), the People's... Church...hereby requests to be informed... whether its members are privileged to accept the services and benefits of the schools, hospitals, and sanitariums either or all of them, now under the control of or operated by the General Conference..., located at Tacoma Park, D.C., or the District, state, or local conference subordinate thereto or in ecclesiastical fellowship therewith... The urgent and immediate needs of the People's S.D.A church along the lines of medical and educational facilities not only demand this communication, but demand immediate relief...<sup>69</sup>

In response A.G. Daniel's showed the institutional acceptance of racism within the SDA church. With careful precision Daniel's began by pointing to Ellen White's counsel as a reason for the current policies of the church. After quoting from her 1891 statement concerning the need to not form policy over this issue, he then interpreted her message to mean "Thus every conference committee, church Board, and minister is left free to adjust the perplexities of this difficult problem according to the circumstances and the necessities of the case in different localities."<sup>70</sup> By misquoting Ellen White,

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<sup>69</sup> See GCC, February 26, 1906, 2-3.

<sup>70</sup> GCC, February 26, 1906, 4; Daniel's use of EGW is very interesting as one notices what is excluded from her statement (see above and fn.11). By leaving out the context of the original discussion to support segregation church wide and her statements in regards to the Christian responsibility to

Daniel's sought to convince the church that the policies that he promoted gained support from the spiritual leader of the SDA church.<sup>71</sup>

While acknowledging everyone's universal right to salvation, Daniel also concluded that true wisdom and evangelism should naturally encourage the Black membership to "self-sacrifice for the good of others." He proposed that African Americans should accept segregation and even allow it to be "carried out voluntarily in a cheerful, Christian spirit."<sup>72</sup>

On the surface Daniel's letter could be perceived as a charitable and even sympathetic letter in response to the concerns of the People's church. Unfortunately, the solutions he offered never grew to fruition. Daniel's suggested that the church form a committee in order to address their concerns directly to the institutions. He pointed out that the General Conference had no direct control over the operation of these organizations, but he failed to acknowledge that he along with other influential members of the General Conference Committee also served on these local boards. Daniel knew full well that they would never be admitted into the hospitals or the schools.<sup>73</sup>

All promises for future facilities in DC did not occur until the mid-twentieth century. For the moment the Seventh-day Adventist church effectively removed any and

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personally operate under no color line, Daniel's intended for the People's Church to view Ellen White as a supporter of the current policy of segregation and prejudice.

<sup>71</sup> Daniels goes on to quote a larger portion of EGW's writings in where she counsels, "The breaking down of distinctions between the white and the colored races unfits the blacks to work for their own class, and exerts a wrong influence upon the whites," GCC, February 26, 1906, 8; The context of the passage deals specifically with the deep South where attempts to remove separation of races could lead to severe persecution. Daniel's interpreted EGW's counsel in one location and instance as a universal method to be applied in any sector in America. His interpretation of her counsel would eventually lead the church to adopt segregation practices well into the twentieth century.

<sup>72</sup> GCC, February 26, 1906,9.

<sup>73</sup> See *Yearbook*, 1906, 97,119. I am indebted to Morgan's research on bringing this point to the light; see Morgan, *Apostle to Black America*, 300.



all support from their Black constituents in DC. Because of the lack of concern for the welfare of African Americans many had to look to other options out of necessity. The People's Seventh-day Adventist Church having exhausted all available options and with no foreseeable support in sight parted ways with the Seventh-day Adventist Church.<sup>74</sup>

The SDA church continued to be challenged by the issues plaguing the United States. By 1909 the situation for African Americans showed no sign of improving. Segregation had become accepted in most of America, and because of this Adventists had to continue to adapt to the surrounding culture. Unfortunately, the years of acquiescing to internal racial pressures caused the church to look more favorably towards segregation as a viable cultural solution for race tensions. The landscape had changed, and with that so did the counsel given by Ellen White.

Some of Ellen White's most controversial statements concerning race can be found in her 1909 writings. By this time, the church had experienced severe persecution by the South and other communities over their views on the color line. Because of that EGW recognized the significant danger that came with viewing all races as completely equal. In order for the work to continue EGW strengthened her counsel on racial separation in places where tensions were high. Because the church "ministers did not co-operate, as they should of done" immediately in 1863, the situation had systematically become more hostile.<sup>75</sup>

As a way forward in this new climate, Ellen White urged the churches to "work chiefly for those of their own race" and not putting into general practice "white and

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<sup>74</sup> Morgan, *Apostle to Black America*, 304-11.

<sup>75</sup> White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, 205.

colored people worshipping in the same building.”<sup>76</sup> This is not much different from her earlier messages concerning cultural outreach. For EGW, she saw that in most circumstances, people of the same race could reach their people without as much hindrance. But before, she needed to only suggest discernment where now the times made it clear that any attempts at integration would be disastrous for not only Black missions but Southern White missions as well.

Still, Ellen White continued to urge the church to establish adequate facilities for African Americans:

Let the colored believers be provided with neat, tasteful houses of worship. Let them be shown that this is done not to exclude them from worshipping with white people, because they are black, but in order that the progress of the truth may be advanced. Let them understand that this plan is to be followed until the Lord shows us a better way.

The only way that her counsel would ever succeed depended on fair and equal accommodations for both races. To this point the SDA church had shown itself to be unable to fairly distribute funds to the churches in need. In order for the continued advancement of African American mission, this needed to change. Ellen White foresaw dark times ahead for this country and in anticipation of that she sought to prepare the church for the work ahead.

EGW had in view the long game. Befitting the prophetic office she anticipated the continued rise in prejudice in the nation: “As time advances, and race prejudices increase, it will become almost impossible, in many places, for white workers to labor for the colored people. Sometimes the white people who are not in sympathy with our work

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<sup>76</sup>.White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, 206.

will unite with the colored people to oppose it.”<sup>77</sup> But she also saw a time where opportunity to “reach many, many souls” would be possible:

These opportunities will appear as the Southern field is worked and the loud cry is given. When the Holy Spirit is poured out, there will be a triumph of humanity over prejudice in seeking the salvation of human beings. God will control minds. Human hearts will love as Christ loved. And the color line will be regarded by many very differently from the way in which it is now regarded. To love as Christ loves, lifts the mind into a pure, heavenly, unselfish atmosphere.<sup>78</sup>

EGW continued to stand by her conviction that the truly converted heart could not experience prejudice. By a real life changing relationship with Christ, the heart in its transformation also lost the hatred it once felt towards the other race. The struggles of the moment did not equate to the eventual joy to come. For that reason EGW remained hopeful with racial progress within the Seventh-day Adventist church.

While the Border States and progressively the Northern states began to feel the pressures of the race question, the South continued to grow. In 1909 the Black membership within the SDA church had grown to one thousand and showed no signs of slowing. The realization of the continued progress within the denomination caused the leadership to establish the Negro Department of the General Conference.<sup>79</sup> Now like never before, African Americans would be able to report directly to the General Conference through this committee. The needs of Black people now had a voice never possessed before in the church, and using that voice they continued to promote African

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<sup>77</sup> White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, 207-8.

<sup>78</sup> White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, 209; EGW’s mention of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the loud cry is a common theme within Adventism, see Taylor G. Bunch, “The Loud Cry,” *Ministry: International Journal for Pastors* (July, 1949).

<sup>79</sup> Baker, *Dynamics of Communication*, 318-19.

American education.

In 1909 Ellen White visited the Oakwood Industrial School for the second and last time. Every time she visited the grounds she became further convinced of the potential the growing campus offered to African American students. The combination of industrial and spiritual education, in her mind, embodied the Christian message: "We are endeavoring to bring the colored people to that place where they can be self-supporting... For years I have done what I could to help the colored people, and I have never found the work so well begun in any place as I find at the present time."<sup>80</sup> As she encouraged the students she herself also felt encouragement in seeing the fruits of her labor. While she would never visit the grounds in person again, her contributions to the campus and to the work in general continued on well past her death.<sup>81</sup> Empowered by the freeing of the mind through education, many of the students that left Oakwood would shape African American policy for years to come.

At the close of the Progressive Era in 1920, a significant event occurred on the grounds of Oakwood that would set the tone for future progress of African Americans within the SDA church. Up to this time, the school continued to be run by White Superintendents and Presidents, but the inadequacy of this arrangement began to become apparent. The contradiction of requiring African Americans to worship separately but not allowing them to participate in the decisions of their institutions started to become obvious to the young African American Students.

Poor judgment concerning a disciplinary matter by the President of Oakwood caused the student body to strike. This protest caused a halt to classes for a week and

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<sup>80</sup> Baker, *A Place Called Oakwood*, 7, 9.

<sup>81</sup> EGW had a portion of her estate go to Oakwood.

forced the staff into a conversation with the representative student body.<sup>82</sup> Eventually the faculty made concessions in favor of the demands from the student body. The children of Oakwood once uneducated and afraid were becoming equipped to meet the challenges of their generation. The seed for African Americans within the Seventh-day Adventist Church had taken root.

Prejudice inherent with the Seventh-day Adventist church caused many road blocks to the complete integration of African Americans. At times almost unwittingly, the SDA church adhered and constructed policies that would go against the very fundamental teachings they espoused. Making change even the more difficult, many within the denomination did not see themselves as racist. Rather than seeing African Americans as truly equal human beings, many Whites never thought it possible for Blacks to ever operate without their assistance. The road proved difficult in changing this ingrained mindset. The consistent counsel from the pen of Ellen G. White proved to be one of the only consistent voices within the denomination. While the church as an organization did not adhere to the principled methods espoused by her words, faithful missionaries took up the mantle and began to enter the South.

It has been demonstrated how pervasive white supremacy had become within the denomination. Unlike her Protestant neighbors, the SDA church did not adhere officially to the doctrines or theories popularly used in support of racism and segregation. Unfortunately, the church did set up its own policies to in affect institutionalize the very positions they were ethically opposed too. Key leaders throughout the Progressive Era would set precedence for the delayed desegregation of

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<sup>82</sup> Reynolds, *We Have Tomorrow*, 202-3.

SDA institutions and arguably set in motion the eventual death of Lucy Byard by their inability to see past the demonic dark cloud of the color line. But in spite of all the prejudice within the SDA church both races continued to strive together. As time progressed, the power behind the third angels message and the blessed hope of a soon coming Savior, made all of the trials and challenges seem meaningful. Because of their Theological, Eschatological outlook, African Americans continued to strive with the SDA church even when they were not wanted.